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EDITORIAL: WITH HONOR, PRINCIPLE & DIGNITY

We do not now and will never know all the details, but we do know this much about United Airlines Flight 93. A group of American men fought back against those hijacking their airplane. They did not save their own lives or the lives of the other passengers. The plane crashed and all aboard were killed. But they did keep that plane from crashing into whatever target the hijackers had in mind - possibly the U.S. Capitol, possibly the White House.

We know what we know largely because of calls made over cellular phones. Jeremy Glick and Thomas Burnett Jr. both dialed their wives and explained what they could. These men and others such as federal law enforcement officer Richard J. Guadagno of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Eureka, apparently tried to wrest the plane's controls from a terrorist, and in the struggle, the plane plummeted into a Pennsylvania field.

James Smith, USFWS project manager in Red Bluff, said those who knew Guadagno well think he would have been likely to lead the endeavor to take back the plane.

"He was a no-nonsense type of person, direct and assertive," Smith said. "A lot of people felt he wouldn't sit there quietly and let them take control.

"He was a project leader."

The story of Guadagno, Glick, Burnett and others who may have been involved is one of men who could have cowered and did not, who could have given up and did not. It is a story that should and almost certainly will live along with other stories of courage and daring in the face of great danger.

It is a story that sets an example, and it is a chronicle of the most formidable of decisions - that of saving lives by forfeiting their own.

Those who knew these men down to the bare bones of their character are certain they would have responded as they had previously tackled life's large challenges - head on. That this one of four lunatic missions failed indicates they did just that, and for that they can be counted among the finest of patriots for the roles they played in preventing even greater bloodshed.

It truly takes the heart of a hero to face death with honor, principle and

dignity.

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